

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Effective Discipline Ages 13-17

Page 1 – none.

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- Teens should be able to respect the parent/caregiver's authority. Harsh discipline such as verbal abuse, shouting, name-calling is harmful to their self-esteem and makes it difficult for them to have respect.
- Effective discipline is about teaching and guiding, not just forcing the teen to obey.
- Discipline is usually most effective when it teaches appropriate behavior and self control. The goal is to teach self-discipline which gives a sense of empowerment and improves self-esteem.
- Teens need to know that the parent/caregiver is caring and also in control. This gives them a sense of security and trust.

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- Each teen is an individual and may develop earlier or later than others.
- **The many physical, hormonal and emotional changes** the teenager is going through can affect their behaviors and place additional stress on both the teen and caregiver. Understanding these changes and helping the teen understand them can help you and your teen avoid conflict.
- Hormonal changes can cause mood swings and **increase impulsivity**. Take this as a learning opportunity to talk with the teen about these changes and how they can affect mood and behaviors. Increasing their awareness of these changes can increase their ability to control their responses.
- In their attempts to separate from parents and move toward independence, **they begin to want more privacy** and can become withdrawn from parents and caregivers. They begin to confide more in their peers. This doesn't mean they don't need you or want your help – even if they don't express it.
- The physical and emotional changes they are going through and their need to fit in and be accepted by peers often increase their **sensitivity to criticism**.
- Teens begin to **question parents'/caregivers' values** and rules as they begin to develop abstract & more philosophical thinking.

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- **Teens want discipline** - even though it may not seem like it at times. Clear rules and consequences provide an important structure that helps them feel safe, secure and in control.
- **Remain calm:** Avoid yelling since this teaches them that it's all right to yell if you get mad. It actually reinforces the very behavior you are trying to extinguish. If things are escalating too much, take a break until you regain your composure.
- **Avoid criticism:** Offer positive reinforcement of desirable behavior and avoid stating it in negative terms. For example: It's better to say "I appreciate that you did your chores without my having to ask," rather than, "Well, you finally got around to doing your chores."
- **Be a good role model:** Teens depend on caring adults to provide them with role models for appropriate behavior. If you yell and speak to others in a disrespectful way when you are angry, this teaches them to do the same.

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- **Rules provide stability** – Having parents who set firm boundaries is actually reassuring to kids even though they will probably not express it. Setting rules and consequences lets them know

you care about them and are interested in their welfare. They need you to set limits they can't set for themselves.

- **Age appropriate rules:** Don't demand a 16 year old to be in by 9:00 pm on the weekend. This is unrealistic and you'll be setting yourself up for conflict and setting them up to disobey the rule.
- **Have your teen participate:** Having them help set rules and consequences gives them a sense of control and greatly reduces the number of arguments you'll have.
- They cannot claim that punishments or expectations are unfair if they help set them.
- **Be consistent:** It is normal for teens to test limits. If you are inconsistent with what the limits are, then you will be encouraging the behavior you are trying to extinguish.
- Make sure you set limits and consequences that you are going to enforce. Teens need to know that you mean what you say, otherwise you lose credibility.

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- **Consequences quickly completed:** If consequences cannot be completed quickly, they lose impact, and the teen loses incentive. It's important to give teens opportunities to demonstrate appropriate behavior so that they can learn. This builds trust between you which helps build self-esteem.
- **Ex.:** Teen comes home late from an activity. If you say, "You grounded for the next 2 weeks," it loses its impact after a couple of days, and they have no incentive to try to maintain appropriate behaviors.
- **It's better to say:** "You came home very late after we agreed on a time, so tomorrow I will pick you up." or "Tomorrow you will have to stay home." This gives them an opportunity to try again right away.
- **Establish trust:** An important part of your relationship. Trust has to be earned by both of you.
- **Natural and logical consequences:** Experiencing the consequences of their choices teaches self-discipline. (this leads into next slide.)

Page 8 – **Example of natural consequence:** The teen is supposed to do their own laundry. They don't do it. They have no clean clothes to wear to school. (not imposed by the parent, because the teen and parent have a prior understanding that the teen takes care of their own clothes)

Page 9 – **Example of logical consequence:** The teen wrecks the car. The teen loses car privileges for a set period of time (imposed by the parent). When the teen is very clear on the rules and consequences, and has participated in setting them, the parent or caregiver can calmly impose the consequence without becoming angry or upset. They can remind the teen that they have made a choice.

They choose to break the rule and suffer the consequence. Next time they can make a better choice.

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- **Immediate intervention:** Discipline for any type of aggressive behaviors such as fighting, bullying, destroying property, etc. - should be swift and with consequences that are very firm and have great impact. The teen needs to understand this is nonnegotiable.
- **Consequences:** Withholding privileges is usually very effective. The privileges withheld should have great impact on the teen.
- Examples – grounding them from car privileges, after school activities, friends, cell phone, computer, etc.
- If this is not effective, or if the behaviors are severe, you may need to seek outside help from a school counselor, Behavioral Health Services or Military Community Services.

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- **Coordinate:** It helps if the caregiver and the parents can support each other regarding the teen's discipline and coordinate discipline methods. Collaboration and consistency are effective approaches to effective discipline.
- **Share issues:** Parents and caregivers should advise each other of their discipline methods and discuss what seems to work best.
- Keep each other informed of discipline issues at home, at school and in other activities or situations.
- **Report positive behavior** Tell each other about all the positive things the teen says or does

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- **Changes: Teen's role in the home**
 - Different routines
 - Increase in responsibilities
 - Financial stressors
 - Change in residence and/or school
- **Moods & behaviors:**
 - Increased irritability
 - Feelings of anxiety and sadness
 - Increase in problem behaviors may occur especially if the teen has trouble verbalizing their fears and anxieties
 - Withdrawing from family and friends
 - Loss of appetite, sleep disturbance
 - Decline in grades
- **Preparing your teen:**
 - Give as many details as possible
 - Encourage them to talk, but don't pressure them
 - Listen without being judgmental
 - Encourage them to connect with peers and stay involved in outside activities
 - Keep teachers and school counselors informed
 - Develop plans for staying in touch with the deployed parent

Page 13 – Knowing when to seek help is a sign of strength and courage. It also demonstrates responsibility and caring.

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Page 18 – none.